Imitate this Perfection, by Acts of Friendſhip and Charity towards our Brethren: For otherwiſe, inſtead of bearing any Reſemblance to the Divine Nature, we ſeem wholly to be acted by another Principle, and that ſuch an one too, as is alas! moſt oppoſite and contrary to it. Whereas thoſe Men, who make it their Buſineſs to promote the Good and Happineſs of others, as they bear the Lively Image of Almighty GOD, ſo they can't but do thoſe Things that are Grateful and Acceptable in his Sight.

2. Another Argument to prove, that GOD is well-pleaſed with Works of Charity and Mercy, is the conſtant Practice of our Saviour and his Apoſtles: All thoſe Miracles that they wrought, being to promote the Common Good, and Intereſt of Mankind. And in this they ſo conſtantly Perſevered, that notwithſtanding thoſe Indignities and Affronts, that were continually caſt upon them, they ſeem to have made it their whole Buſineſs and Employ, to find out fit Objects of their Favour. Surely, if any one, the Son of GOD knew how to Perform his Father's Will. To ſuppoſe the contrary, is full as abſurd, as to ſup-

poſe, that *He caſt out Devils, by the Power of Beelzebub, the Prince of the Devils;* which is indeed an Abſurdity, that would paſs with none, but a Jew, or a Phariſee. And therefore, ſeeing that all thoſe Miraculous Operations, were chiefly imploy'd in Works of Charity and Pity; Hence we may infer, that GOD himſelf is delighted and well-pleaſed with Works of this Nature: and that therefore, if we would any ways reſemble the Divine Goodneſs, and imitate the Example of our Bleſſed Lord, we muſt do Good unto all Men; tho' there are ſome indeed, who, by Reaſon of the Nearneſs of our Alliance and Relation to them, lay claim to more than an ordinary Share in our Affections.

Laſtly, That this is a *Grateful and Acceptable Sacrifice in the Sight of God,* may be alſo concluded from the Nature of the Thing it ſelf: It being, indeed, a moſt Noble, and GOD-like Quality, and truly Becoming the Dignity of our Nature. None ſurely can act up to the Generous Spirit of Chriſtianity, but He that walks by this Maxim, *It is much more Bleſſed to Give, than to Receive.* Pity and Compaſſion,

paſſion, in the ſtricteſt Sence and Meaning of the Words, more Peculiarly belonging to the Houſhold of Faith. Humanity was ever a Nation's Glory; But where That once was Baniſht and Remov'd, all Things tend preſently to Ruin and Confuſion. It was This that made King *Solomon*'s Grandeur appear the more Magnificent: And the Greatneſs of his Bounty, was an Evident Demonſtration of the Greatneſs of his Soul. In this conſiſted his Chiefeſt Happineſs, That he had not only Wealth and Riches in abundance, but an Heart equally large with his Eſtate. But farther, If to live in Obedience to the moſt Noble Rules of Religion and Vertue, is to do that which is Acceptable in GOD's Sight, (as we have all Imaginable Reaſon to believe,) and if the Precepts of Religion, and the Common Principles of Morality, do ſo ſtrictly enjoyn us to promote the Good and Intereſts of one another; then we may, as from a certain Principle conclude, that while we thus Relieve the Wants and Neceſſities of our Brethren, we return a Grateful Acknowledgment for thoſe Bleſſings, and Favours, GOD hath beſtowed upon us.

But leaſt the above-mentioned Argu-

ments ſhould not be ſufficient, I ſhall proceed, Secondly, to produce ſome few Texts of Scripture, for the more Plain Proof and Confirmation of the Point; and thoſe too, both by way of Precept and Example.

Firſt, by way of Precept, Thus we Read, *Deut.* 15. 11. *Thou ſhalt open thy Hand wide to thy Brother, to the Poor, and to the Needy, that are in the Land:* And this we find enforced by a ſtrong and cogent Reaſon, *verſ.* 15. *That, becauſe thou wert a Bond-man in the Land of Egypt, and the Lord delivered thee; therefore ſhalt thou do this thing.* As if it had been ſaid, that becauſe the Lord hath been Gracious and Merciful to thee, and Bleſt thee with the Good Things of this World, therefore hath he commanded thee to be Pitiful, and Tender-Hearted towards thy Poor and Needy Brethren, as he hath dealt well and favourable with thee. Thus the Son of *Sirach* exhorteth, *Ecclus.* 4. 3, 4. *Add no more Trouble to an Heart that is Afflicted: neither defer to Give to him that is in Need. Reject not their Supplications; nor turn away thy Face from the Poor.* Thus St. Paul, *Gal.* 6. 10. *As often as we have Opportu-*

portunity, let us do Good unto all Men, eſpecially thoſe of the Houſhold of Faith. And, indeed, there is ſcarce any Duty, throughout the Book of GOD, that hath more Promiſes annexed to the Performance of it, than this of Charity and Mercy. Thus we Read, *Iſa.* 58. 10, 11. *If we ſtretch out our Souls to the Hungry, and ſatisfy the Afflicted Soul, then ſhall our Light ariſe in Obſcurity, and our Darkneſs be as the Noon-day: The Lord will continually be our Guide, and ſatisfy our Souls in Drought; he will make Fat our Bones; and we ſhall be like a watered Garden, and like a Spring of Water, whoſe Waters fail not.* There are many more Inſtances of this Nature, which Time would fail me to enumerate; And therefore, ſeeing that Example very Frequently out-goes Precept, and the Practice of the World, does many times ſuperſede its Commands, I ſhall,

In the ſecond Place, proceed to mention ſome Inſtances out of Holy Writ, of the Great Bleſſings that have attended thoſe Men, that have been Eminent and Remarkable for Acts of Liberality and Bounty,

and

and of the great Judgments that have been executed upon ſuch as have been Negligent or Remiſs in Deeds of Charity and Mercy. It was by this Free and Generous Diſpoſition, that the Good Men of Old, had the Honour of entertaining Angels unawares, as did *Abraham* and *Lot*, Gen. 18. and 19. Chap. And therefore it is, that the Apoſtle exhorts us to Acts of Hoſpitality and Friendſhip, and to be Kind to all our Fellow-Chriſtians, of what Nation and Country ſoever they are; ſeeing that we know not, but that thereby we may Entail a Bleſſing upon us, and our Poſterity. Whereas, on the contrary, we read, St. *Luke* 16. The Rich Glutton, who refus'd to extend his Charity, or (as it is elſewhere expreſt) To deal his Bread to the Hungry, when in Hell could not obtain one Drop of Water to cool his Tongue. And notwithſtanding, *He in his life time Received his Good Things, and* Lazarus *thoſe that were Evil.* Tho' but now, *He was cloathed in Purple and Fine-Linnen, and fared ſumptuouſly every Day, and the Beggar in Rags, deſiring nothing, but the Offals that were carried from his Luxurious Table:* Yet, ſee on a ſuddain the Scene is altered, and the Rich Man forc'd

to

to remove from his Pompous Palace, and take up his Habitation in the Regions of Darkneſs; while the other is wafted into the Manſions of Bliſs, and carried by an Angel into *Abraham*'s Boſome. This, tho' it be but a Parable, may nevertheleſs be fitly apply'd to thoſe Men, who having this World's Goods, are yet ſo Miſerably Covetous and Stingy, that they will not part with the leaſt of thoſe Bleſſings, to Relieve the Neceſſities of their Needy Brethren. Such indeed, inſtead of doing Good in their Generations, think they are wholly Born for Themſelves. Such, inſtead of bearing any Reſemblance to the Divine Goodneſs, (if you will believe King *Solomon*) are a Reproach to it. If, while we are thus Freely, and Liberally Diſpos'd, we can only offer up a Grateful and Acceptable Sacrifice in God's Sight; and ſo conſequently, live up to the Noble, and Generous Spirit of Chriſtianity: Then we may conclude, that the others are ſo far from Enjoying thoſe Bleſſings, that they have receiv'd at his Hands, that they ſeem to be given them with a Curſe, to Plague and Torment them in this Life; and add to, and encreaſe their Damnation

in

in the next. Who, tho' they know it to be their Duty, *to do Good, and Communicate* to the Wants of their Fellow-Creatures, will not only be Negligent and Remiſs, in the Performance of it, in their own Perſons, but Encourage others, to be Guilty of the ſame Vice; to be as Unaccountably Wretched and Miſerable, as themſelves.

III And thus I have Finiſht the Second Thing propoſed; and ſhall therefore, in the Third and Laſt Place, apply the Whole to the preſent Buſineſs; that thereby you may be the better Encouraged to a free, and generous Contribution, towards your Poor and Needy Fellow-Citizens: this being, indeed, one Principal End, and Deſign of theſe our Publick Meetings, our Great and Solemn Feaſts, and Aſſemblies.

And here, perhaps, it may be expected, that I ſhould ſay ſomething of the Excellencies of this our Native City; as alſo of the great Worth and Vertues of our Anceſtors: But this is a Subject fit rather for an Hiſtory, than a Sermon; and much more becoming an Antiquary, than a Divine.

vine. Beſides, I muſt fairly confeſs, that I am wholly unacquainted with the Annals of this, tho' my Native Place; and ſhall therefore forbear any Deſcription of this Nature; leſt that, which might otherwiſe have been a Lovely and Beautiful Landskip, be wholly ſpoil'd, for want of Skill and Judgment in the Artiſt. However, this I may modeſtly, and without a Bluſh commend in you, namely, The great Care and Expence of late, in Beautifying and Adorning the Houſes of GOD, of which theſe Sacred Walls, in which I now Speak, are an open and ample Demonſtration: Inſomuch, that if the Chiefeſt Exerciſes of Religion, do conſiſt in the External Ornaments of the Churches, you may indeed, in ſome Senſe, be ſaid to *Worſhip God in the Beauty of Holineſs.*

But to return to the preſent Buſineſs in hand: There are two Duties, that I crave leave to Recommend to your Conſideration; ſeeing, that the due Obſervance of them, will cauſe you to Behave your ſelves, as worthy Fellow-Citizens of this City, and True Fellow-Members of the ſame Common Faith and Religion.

The Firſt Thing that I would recommend to you, (as indeed moſt uſeful and neceſſary, for the Preſervation of Society in general) is the Promotion of Unity and Concord, one among another: For the Happineſs and Proſperity of all Communities, or Bodies Politick, do chiefly conſiſt in this, That all Sorts and Conditions of Men among them, do, in their ſeveral Places and Stations, endeavour to Maintain and Support the common Intereſt; as, in the Body Natural, each part employs it ſelf in its different Function, to ſecure the Strength and Vigour of the Whole. For while we are thus linkt into one Common Bond of Peace and Unity, and entirely allied, by the moſt Endearing Ties of Love and Friendſhip, we are the better able to reſiſt the violent Efforts of thoſe, that would do us any Injury or Wrong. *Vis unita fortior*, is an old, but true Obſervation, which like a Shaft of Arrows, when bound together, very Difficult to be broken; but when ſeparate and apart, to be deſtroyed with the greateſt Eaſineſs and Pleaſure.

It is Fabled of *Orpheus*, that he, by his great Skill and Judgment in Muſick, cau-

caused the very Stones and Trees to follow him, and quit their former Habitations, and that with these he Built a City. The Moral of it is very easy, *viz.* That he, by those Excellent Laws, which he had composed, reduced those People, who before were wholly Barbarous and Savage, to some kind of Manners and Civility; causing them to quit their Woods, and unfrequented Places, and be united into one common Body or Society. Surely, If he had not, first of all, implanted the goodly Notion of Love and Unity in their Minds, in vain had he attempted this so great, so wonderful a Change, without this, all his Musick had been dull and insipid; and he might, with as much Ease, Court a *Tyger*, or Complement a *Bear*, as think, that, without these Harmonious Chords, he could have brought the People to Obey his Laws, and willingly submit to the Rules of Government.

Indeed, There is nothing tends more to the Subversion and Decay of Societies, than those Heats and Animosities, that every now and then arise among them, and that upon slight and trivial Occasions: when

Men, upon the leaſt Diſguſt, ſhall divide themſelves into Factions and Parties, and ſet up for the Maintenance of different Intereſts; inſomuch that that Love and Affection, they have hitherto ſhewn one another, is all on a ſuddain violated and diſſolved, and nothing but Ruin and Diſtraction to be ſeen. Our Saviour plainly tells us, that when once a Kingdom, or City, comes thus to be Divided, 'tis in a fair way to become a Deſolation. The fatal Conſequences of theſe unhappy Diſcords, were remarkably evident and plain among the *Jews*, and their own Unnatural and Inteſtine Diviſions, greatly haſtened their final Deſtruction and Overthrow. But we need not go ſo far for an Example: This our Native Country hath ſeverely ſmarted under its Yoke. But now, ſeeing it hath pleaſed Almighty GOD, once more, to make us whole, in ſome meaſure at leaſt, let us follow the Admonition, that ſeconded the Miraculous Cure in the Goſpel, St. *John* 5. 14. and be no more guilty of thoſe Sins, of which ſuch unſpeakable Calamities were the Effects, leſt a greater Evil, if poſſible, ſhould befal us. Let me exhort you therefore (Men, Brethren, and my much Honoured

noured Fellow-Citizens) in the Words of the Apoſtle, *Eph.* 4. 31, 32. *That all Bitterneſs and Wrath, and Anger and Clamour, and Evil-ſpeaking, be put away from you, with all Malice. And that you be Kind to one another, Tender-hearted, Forgiving one another, as God, for Chriſt's ſake, hath forgiven you.* And may Brotherly Love and Charity, Peace and Good-Neighbourhood, and all thoſe Bleſſings that depend thereupon, conſtantly flouriſh and abound among us, that our *Jeruſalem* may be a City at Unity with it ſelf.

2. The other Thing, that I would Recommend to your Conſideration, and which, indeed, my Text more particularly directs me to, is a Free and Generous Contribution towards thoſe, who, among us, are in Miſery and Diſtreſs: there being nothing in Nature, more Glorious and Great, than to be Pitiful and Tender-hearted towards thoſe, who are in Neceſſity and Want: This, even among Heathen and Barbarous Nations, was ever accounted a moſt Noble and Heroick Vertue; ſuch as, almoſt, Deify'd and Immortalized Men upon Earth, and render'd their Memories Sacred to all Poſterity.

And

And ſhall we, who profeſs the Name of Chriſt, ſuffer our Selves to be Out-done by thoſe, who never heard of the Goſpel? Shall we, who pretend to be the moſt Pure, and Reformed Church in the World, be Negligent or Remiſs in our Duty towards our Neighbour? Shall the Church of *Rome* think, that they Merit Heaven by their Good Works; and ſhall we reject the Uſe of them as Frivolous, and of no Account? Hath GOD Commanded us to be willing to Diſtribute, and ready to *Communicate*, and hath aſſur'd us, that by ſo doing, we offer up a Grateful, and Acceptable Sacrifice in his Sight: and ſhall we thus dare to Diſobey his Laws, and Reject his Commands?

For GOD's Sake (Brethren) let me exhort you, if you have any Reſpect to your own Honour and Reputation; if you deſire GOD's Bleſſings ſhould be continued to you, that you may Proſper, and Flouriſh in this Life; and to mention the greateſt Laſt; if you would promote the Good, and Intereſt of your own Souls in the Next; Endeavour, I pray you, to arrive to ſome Eminence and Perfection in the

the Practice of this Noble, this Generous, this truly Chriſtian-like Vertue. But more eſpecially, with all due Reſpect, to thoſe who are Natives of this our City. We muſt indeed extend our Pity and Compaſſion, not only to Neighbouring Counties; But the whole World ſhould, in ſome Meaſure, partake of our Favours: Tho' theſe juſtly claim the greateſt Share in our Affections, and, by a Native Right, do put in to be the Peculiar Objects of our Regard. And truly, to be wanting, in Expreſſions of Love and Tenderneſs towards them, would ſhew a ſtrange Kind of Hardned and Unrelenting Spirits; and argue us to be much rather Forreigners, than Fellow-Citizens.

Far be it from me to entertain ſo hard a Thought of any here Preſent; For I do not in the leaſt doubt, but that you, having had of late ſo worthy an Example of Magnificence and Charity, a Benefactor, indeed, whoſe Name, among us, ought to be had ever in the greateſt Veneration and Eſteem. I ſay, I do not at all queſtion; But that you will, (in ſome Meaſure) endeavour to Imitate ſo truly Great and Eminent a Patriot;

triot; and by freely Contributing to the Neceſſities of your Brethren, lay down ſo Noble and Generous a Preſident, as may, deſervedly, be followed by ſucceeding Ages.

What now remains, But that we put up our Joint Petitions to Almighty GOD, That it would pleaſe him ever to Protect and Defend this our Native City; That he would Deliver it from all Forreign Force, and Domeſtick Plots and Contrivances; That he would Grant us Peace within our Walls, and Plenteouſneſs within our Habitations; and, That he would ſo Bleſs us, that we may ſee our *Jeruſalem* in Proſperity, all our Lives long, and a firm and laſting Peace ſettled, and eſtabliſhed throughout this our *Iſrael*.

Which may God, of his Infinite Mercy grant, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; to whom with the Holy Ghoſt, be Aſcrib'd, as is moſt due, Might, Majeſty, Dominion and Power, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.

FINIS.

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A Perſuaſive to CHASTITY:

694.g.19.
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A

SERMON

Preached before the

KING,

AT

St. JAMES's,

On the 11th of *December*, 1748.

By *EDWARD COBDEN*, D.D.
Archdeacon of *London*, and Chaplain in Ordinary
to His MAJESTY.

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THE following Sermon having given Occaſion to ſome unjuſt Cenſures; the Author has thought proper to lay it before the Public. It now appears, therefore, in its own Vindication; and it is hoped that the Honeſt and Candid Reader will find nothing in the Sentiments or the Expreſſion of the enſuing Pages unworthy of the ſacred Function of a Preacher of the Goſpel, or of the ſerious Attention of a Chriſtian Aſſembly.

There is likewiſe another Motive of more Weight with the Author, for the Publication of it: Which is, the Hopes he entertains of doing ſome Service by it to the Cauſe of Virtue and Religion. For tho' he cannot expect to prevail much againſt Iniquities ſo triumphant: He is willing, however, to do his utmoſt, and leave the Iſſue to GOD. And if but a ſmall Number ſhould liſten to his Advice: If but one Sinner ſhould be converted by it from the Error of his Ways, he will think himſelf amply rewarded.

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GEN. XXXIX. 9.

How can I do this great Wickedneſs, and ſin againſt GOD?

THE Hiſtory of *Joſeph*, as contained in this and the following Chapters, tho' drawn up in the greateſt Plainneſs and Simplicity of Style; yet affords ſo intereſting a Narration, that there are few, I believe, who have not peruſed it with Pleaſure. It is almoſt unneceſſary, therefore, to inform thoſe who now hear me, that theſe Words, *How can I do this great Wickedneſs, and ſin againſt GOD?* are the Anſwer with which that excellent Pattern of Fidelity rejected the importunate Solicitations of his perfidious Miſtreſs. They expreſs the utmoſt Abhorrence

of the Sin to which he was here tempted: And what I intend from them, and from the Example of *Joſeph*'s faithful Conduct, is, a Diſſuaſive from the Sins of Immodeſty; which are riſen, perhaps, to a greater Height, and ſpread to a wider Extent than was ever known in former Ages: Inſomuch that the two Sexes ſeem to vie with each other, which ſhall be moſt forward in diſregarding all Rules of Decency, and violating the Sanctions of the Marriage Contract.

It would not become me to mention ſome of thoſe monſtrous and unnatural Obſcenities with which our Land hath been ſtained: They would be offenſive, indeed, to the Ears even of a modeſt Heathen. I ſhall therefore only inſiſt on two, which are plainly and frequently condemned in Scripture: Nor any where more expreſsly than in theſe Words: *Whoremongers and Adulterers GOD will judge*, Heb. xiii. 4.

The heinous Guilt and deſtructive Conſequences of Adultery, appear ſo ſhocking at firſt Sight, even to Reaſon, unaſſiſted by Revelation;

tion; that, however frequent the Commiſſion of it may be, yet few, I am perſuaded, are ſo hardened and irrational as to become Advocates for it. But ſingle Perſons are too apt to imagine, that all Obligations of Chaſtity are confined to the Marriage Vow. It muſt be confeſſed, indeed, that, in the Inſtance laſt mentioned, the Crime of Impurity is of a deeper Dye, as it is attended with Conſequences more fatal and extenſive: It is a Breach of the ſtrongeſt voluntary Compact, as well as a Tranſgreſſion of that Law of Chaſtity which Nature has engraven upon the Hearts of all Mankind. Thus *Abimelech* thought it no Crime to take *Sarah* for his Concubine, when he imagined ſhe was eſpouſed to no other Perſon: But no ſooner was he informed of her being *Abraham*'s Wife, than he rejected his firſt Deſign with Abhorrence and Diſdain. But whatever Notions the Heathen World might have of theſe Matters, we, who have received the more pure and perfect Law of the Goſpel, are ſufficiently and clearly inſtructed to avoid Impurity of every Kind. We are raiſed to that original Standard of Chaſtity appointed by GOD in Paradiſe, and taught to

reſtrain our Paſſions of this Sort within the pure and undefiled Limits of conjugal Affection.

If we conſider Fornication with the unprejudiced Eye of Reaſon, before the Paſſions have corrupted the Judgment, I am perſuaded there are few Sins which People condemn more in their own Breaſts; which they commit at firſt with more Reluctance and Recoilings of Conſcience; and which, upon cool Reflection, fills them with more Horror and keener Cenſures of their own Conduct. And would a Man give himſelf Leave to reflect upon the irreparable Injury done to the unhappy female Partner in the Iniquity, it would open ſuch a Scene of Miſery to his View, as would be ſufficient to check the moſt inflamed Appetite of the moſt abandoned Libertine. Alas! that Virgin Innocence, which was once her Comfort and her Glory, which was her brighteſt Ornament and moſt valuable Dowry, is loſt, irrecoverably loſt; and Shame, Guilt and Sorrow are to be her continual Attendants. The Perſon who has been the Occaſion of her Ruin, will hardly, (tho' obliged to it in Duty) deal with her upon

Terms

Terms of Honour. And who elſe will venture to take her for a Companion for Life, and believe ſhe can be faithful to him, after having been thus falſe to herſelf? 'Tis well if ſhe does not endeavour to ſcreen herſelf from Cenſure, by the Commiſſion of a more dreadful Sin in the Murder of a ſpurious Infant; and diſcard the Bowels of a Mother to avoid the Scandal of being known to be one. The beſt and wiſeſt Courſe indeed ſhe can take, is, to endeavour to waſh away the Stain ſhe has contracted, with the Tears of unfeigned Repentance, and to take off her Reproach in the Eyes of the World, by giving the Regularity of her future Conduct as an Evidence of the Sincerity of her Contrition. Would to GOD this Method were, after ſo unhappy a Step, more frequently taken! but, alas! it is too often far otherwiſe. It is to be feared the firſt Breach of Chaſtity will be followed with a Train of others, and that ſhe will proceed on in Iniquity till ſhe becomes totally abandoned: A Situation almoſt as miſerable in this preſent Life, as that which theſe unhappy Criminals muſt expect in the next. There is no reflecting on ſo wretched an Object, without the deepeſt